

VOICES

Number 10, March 2009

VOICES is the newsletter of the Australian Land Management Group (ALM Group), a not-for-profit organisation established by landholders to improve environmental outcomes in ways that enable the achievements of landholders and their support organisations to be recognised. The ALM Group has developed and supports the Australian Land Management Certification System (ALMCS).

For information about the ALM Group and the Australian Land Management Certification System (ALMCS) go to our [website](#)

ALM GROUP DIARY

ALM Group workshops
Stanthorpe, 11 March
Mitchell, 23-24 March
St George, 25 March

ALM Group Board meeting, Stanthorpe, 12 March

ALM Group Regional Reps, Stanthorpe 13 March

JUST RELEASED BY ALM GROUP

[Capturing the benefits from improving environmental outcomes](#)

[Why invest in the](#)

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- Support base grows for ALMCS
- The year ahead for ALMCS
- The many ALMCS paradoxes

ALMCS support base grows

We begin 2009 with a support base growing in quality and breadth.

Elders support continues. ALM Group foundation partner, Elders, has shown its practical commitment to work with innovative landholders by extending support for the Australian Land Management Certification System (ALMCS) for a further three years. In announcing this decision Mark Geraghty, Elders General Manager, Marketing said, 'The future of Elders is closely connected to the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of the farm sector. For this reason we are keen to support innovative land managers implementing ALMCS'.

Japanese apparel giant backs ALMCS. In an Australian first, ALMCS is being financially supported by the Japanese apparel giant Onward Kashiya. This significant development, brokered by Australian Wool Innovation Ltd., vindicates the ALM Group resolution to stick with internationally recognised environmental management standards. Onward Kashiya has contributed JPY 10 million (AUD 160,000) to support ALMCS development and implementation. Onward's General Manager Product Development and Marketing, Hikosaburo Seike, visited Australia in February and took the opportunity to meet ALM Group members in South Australia during a tour of the Collins, Henschke and Keynes properties. Mr Seike also had discussions with AWI and Elders representatives. More.



Mr Seike and Mr Maurice Collins admiring selected Merino fleeces in Maurice's historic woolshed, Mt Pleasant, SA.

Major agricultural players focus on ALMCS

We continue to attract interest in ALMCS from prominent and innovative land managers across the full spectrum of size of operations. Invariably those interested in ALMCS are

[Australian Land Management Certification System?](#)

MEMBERS MEET ONLINE

Don't forget the ALM Group online forum. You can talk with other ALM Group members, no matter where they are! Just log in and "chat" to ALM Group members across Australia.

Swap notes on experiences; ask questions of ALM Group management; alert each other to upcoming events or amazing things you have just heard about; and get benefit from the fact that we are all on this journey together.

If you get stuck, or just feel that somehow you are missing out on something important, contact Bruce at (08) 8538 705
bruce@clearconnection.com.au

ALM GROUP BOARD MEMBERS

Nelson Quinn (Chair)
Jock Douglas
Daren Marshall
Tony Gleeson (CEO)
Bruce Munday
Geoff Penton

respected and active in their industry and or communities. Many of the foundation members of the ALM Group have long histories in Landcare, community and industry organisations and many run substantial family operations. Now there is growing interest in ALMCS from larger agricultural and pastoral aggregations and corporations. Last year TV Fairfax Pastoral began to implement ALMCS to improve its environmental management and demonstrate the company's environmental credentials on each of its six properties in central and southern Queensland. Clyde Agriculture and the Bydand Group are considering implementing ALMS across their extensive agricultural and pastoral holdings.

The year ahead for ALMCS

We are now into our 9th year. While it is sobering that it has taken us so long to get to where we are it is also remarkable that, given limited resources and significant barriers, we are able to mount a national program to implement AMLCS.

We have about 180 landholders across four States implementing ALMCS. We have a well-designed system and enough experience with the necessary tools and skills to know that it could be widely adopted. Nevertheless, existing rewards are fragmented, ephemeral and arguably of limited effectiveness. They are not well aligned to promoting broad adoption of a land management certification system.

For the future we need a two-pronged approach to ensure we continue to grow. First, ALM Group members need to advocate for improved access to funds that are now available for natural resource management. Second, we need to increase the rewards available from a wide range of potential sources.

Now is the time. Now is the time to establish ALMCS as a self-sustaining program to deliver improved environmental outcomes, improved agricultural productivity and improved differentiation of agricultural products on world markets.

Our most important support is that from ALM Group members themselves. We also have the support of important partners, including Elders and Onward Kashiyama. Domestic wool marketers have indicated price support for woolgrowers implementing ALMCS. Australian Wool Innovation Ltd (Marketing) 'gets' ALMCS, and we have had constructive discussions with the National Farmers Federation, Meat & Livestock Australia and with the Horticultural Freshcare Program. We have agreements to partner with four catchment management agencies/NRM regional bodies and we are looking to extend these to more regions.

Hopefully registration under the new Farm Ready training program will substantially reduce the ALMCS cost to landholders. We will be seeking funds to help landholders with on-ground works that meet the targets outlined in the Caring for Country business plan.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

Voices is the e-newsletter of the ALMS Group. You have received this issue because you are on the ALMS database. You will continue to receive *Voices* unless you decide to unsubscribe.

CONTACT

Tony Gleeson,
CEO, ALM Group,
'Avondale'

Vinegar Hill Rd
LEGUME NSW 2476
P: 07 46664112

E:

tony.gleeson@alms.org.au

SUBSCRIBE or UNSUBSCRIBE

You have been sent this newsletter because you are on the ALM Group database. To

UNSUBSCRIBE click [here](#)

To SUBSCRIBE, click [here](#)

©Copyright ALM Group
2009

PRIVACY NOTICE

If you are not the intended recipient, or believe that you have received this email in error, please do not print, copy, retransmit, disseminate, or otherwise use the information. Also, please notify the sender that you have received this email in error, and delete the copy you received

This month we will establish a modest ALM Group regional representative structure where participating landholders will help the ALM Group Board and staff to improve ALMCS participation and the servicing of ALM Group members. We are developing commercial arrangements with NRM service providers and we will strengthen our accreditation through an ACCC code of practice. We have retained people to help develop partnerships with legal, accounting and banking entities and to help promote the ALMCS. Our immediate priorities are to better service existing members, grow membership and strengthen benefits for members.

The many ALMCS paradoxes

ALM GROUP CEO, Tony Gleeson, reflects on ALMCS paradoxes.

Some days the number of ALMCS paradoxes seems overwhelming.

Against general commentary that we landholders will be ruined by environmental initiatives, the ALMCS is founded on the proposition that Australian land managers have much to gain from credible responses to increased international and domestic attention to matters environmental.

With few exceptions, and notwithstanding considerable pressure on NRM investment by the public sector, responsible agencies have not systematically assessed the potential impact of internationally-credible environmental management systems on the effectiveness and efficiency of NRM investments.

Against mountains of analyses and reports pointing to the causes of market failure in environmental innovation, initial support for ALMCS has come from organisations seemingly least likely to be able to capture the benefits of that investment.

We have largely discarded the allegedly boring old peer-review-and-publish mode of accountability in favour of sophisticated mechanisms to ensure accountability; the milestone mania populated with 'outcome' mantra. Yet we can read the preposterous proposition that farmers will be more environmentally friendly if through some magic they get a greater share of the consumer dollar. And this notwithstanding the fact that most Australian farm households depend more on non-agricultural income than on agricultural income, that land prices often far exceed that justifiable by likely agricultural returns, and that there is no empirical evidence relating environmental performance to profitability on an industry wide or individual operator basis.

And on other days it is the paradoxes that keep us going for clearly the future cannot simply be an extension of the past. We need to implement new ways to improve environmental outcomes and profitability and to maintain landholder self-

esteem. This means new ways to strengthen motivation for continuous environmental improvement; new ways to differentiate our products in increasingly crowded and nimble international markets; and new ways to network with landholders and to learn from and to celebrate achievements.

And that is why we take comfort in paradoxes.